



Marine Debris Report – September 2006

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Update on Lake Calcasieu, LA Marine Debris Mapping Project

An update on the work locating debris and hazards in Calcasieu Lake from Hurricane Rita impacts. Several members of the project team hit the field on Friday, September 1, 2006, to ground-truth debris/obstructions previously marked during volunteer events to assist with Louisiana Department of Natural Resources' pending removal of obstructions marked by this project. During the course of the day, team members logged (using GPS), described, and photo-documented over 50 obstructions throughout the Calcasieu estuary

Many new obstructions were marked and/or logged... so many, in fact, that they ran out of buoys and PVC! Some new obstructions proved quite interesting, including a lost seine net, and a probable debris field of 'wing-net or butterfly-net shrimp barges'. Prior to the storm the stationary shrimp-barge fleet was estimated at approximately 40 barges by LSG Savoie and LDWF Harbison, sadly only portions of three (3) were visible above the water line.

Through analysis of the results, the team realized that many points were relocated, some had likely shifted and some

obstructions were lost, presumably settling into the predominately soft-bottom. A more in-depth analysis will follow. The volume or size of the hazards may be small in some cases but present a high risk to shrimpers, other commercial fishing vessels and recreational boating. The marking and collaboration with other agencies to remove these hazards is important in preventing future risk to fishing and recreational boating. Future storms raise the risk of moving the hazards to other locations. Similar debris and hazards along Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama also pose similar risks now and in the future.

The Calcasieu Ship channel is used constantly by deep draft shipping to access the Port of Lake Charles (the nation's 12th largest port). The nation's largest shipping terminal (Trunkline LNG) is also located on this waterway and another company is actively building a second very large receiving terminal in this area.

NOAA/VIMS Marine Debris Media Event a Success Despite Tropical Storm Ernesto

The NOAA Marine Debris program and the College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science hosted an event highlighting the program "Identification, Mapping, and Assessment of Derelict Fishing Gear in the Chesapeake Bay" on Thursday, August 31, 2006. A change of plans did not dampen the spirits of the scientists presenting the project's current results. Project investigators demonstrated the impact that derelict or "ghost" crab pots have on the health and economy of the bay, and the importance of their removal for future ecological recovery. Despite howling winds and rain, invited participants from NOAA, VIMS, Congress, the Virginia state legislature, and Maryland and Virginia state governments experienced first hand the different species that were caught in the ghost pots that morning, with the crew braving the rough seas and less than optimal weather to retrieve the pots for the participants on the dock.

The event was also attended by several media outlets and coverage of the project spread throughout the region. Check out the following articles to read more about the project and event:

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/local/dp-14981sy0sep01,0,1443891.story?coll=dp-news-local-final>

<http://home.hamptonroads.com/stories/story.cfm?story=110237&ran=177210>

http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD%2FMGArticle%2FRTD_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149190346763&path=!news&s=1045855934842

<http://www.noaa.gov/>

Project to Quantify Marine Debris in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean Shares Findings

Reports are in from Marine Debris and Sea Birds Surveyors on board the NOAA Ship *David Starr Jordan*. For the week of September 7th, the crew reports rough weather that limited them to only four days of survey effort this week in the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) in the Pacific. The rain was so continuous that the crew began to refer to the ship as "NOAA's Ark". The diversity of sea birds observed was quite high. Unfortunately, the sightings of marine debris were quite high during this period as well. It was reported that on the 3rd day of observation, the ship passed through an area of debris accumulation that "kept (their) fingers moving at impressive speed on the keyboard, trying to keep up and get it all entered". Most of the debris observed consisted of plastic, but included a large partially decomposed tree trunk that lured the observers and a passing sea turtle over for a closer look.

Update on the Hawaii Derelict Net Recycling Program

The Pier 38 bin, part of the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program, a project begun with funding from the NOAA Marine Debris Program, was emptied for the 2nd time on Tuesday, September 5th. In the approximately four months since it was last emptied last, 6,720 lbs. of fishing net and line were placed in it for recycling. The bin is periodically emptied by Schnitzer Steel Hawai'i Corp. and taken to their facility where the net and line are chopped into small pieces. Those pieces are then incinerated to create electricity at the City and County of Honolulu's H-Power waste-to-energy facility.

NOAA Teams up with The Ocean Conservancy for Another Successful ICC

This past Saturday, Sept 16th marked the second year in a row that the NOAA Marine Debris Program has partnered with The Ocean Conservancy (TOC) to organize cleanups throughout the country in celebration of their International Coastal Cleanup (ICC). NOAA teams gathered in Washington, DC, Seattle, Hawaii, and New Hampshire in support of this event. Extended NOAA teams will be cleaning up in Guam and North Carolina this weekend. Preliminary results from the DC and Hawaii efforts of over 85 NOAA volunteers yielded over 170 bags of debris collected. The Hawaii team picked up 6,430 items (of trash, with the #1 item being cigarettes and cigarette filters. At the DC site, the debris was so large and heavy that it didn't fit into trash bags, with the #1 item collected being building materials, and total trash collected weighing in at a whopping 16 tons! Results of the overall global effort will be posted in upcoming reports, and more complete coverage and images of the NOAA effort will be posted on the Marine Debris Program website by September 29th. Visit www.marinedebris.noaa.gov to get a first hand look at the events.

Sea Grant Participates in 18th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep

The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium and the state Department of Natural Resources organized the 18th Annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep, the largest one-day volunteer cleanup event of its kind held on September 16. Thousands of South Carolinians cleaned rivers, lakes, creeks, beaches, marshes, and swamps of litter and aquatic debris.

This cleanup is part of The Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup which includes more than 90 countries. Additionally, Sea Grant Programs and NOAA employees in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Washington and Hawaii participated in events to celebrate the ICC.

Hawaii Marine Debris Team Returns from Successful Effort in NWHI

The Marine Debris team at the Coral Reef Ecosystem Division, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center returned from a successful 28-day removal effort aboard the NOAA ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE. The team collected 14.2 metric tons of marine and land debris, and surveyed over 5.3 sq. km. at Kure Atoll, Pearl and Hermes Atoll, and French Frigate Shoals in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This is the first year of the maintenance mode effort, and data collected from this effort will contribute towards an ongoing accumulation rate study. Annual NWHI debris

accumulation is estimated to be 52 metric tons annually. The Marine Debris team and its many partners have collected 558 metric tons of debris in the NWHI since 1996.

NOAA NWHI Project Receives Living Reef Award

The NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) Coral Reef Ecosystem Division (CRED) Marine Debris project was awarded Hawaii's Living Reef Award 2006 for non-commercial division, government agency. The award was presented by Peter Young (Chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources) at a formal awards luncheon, complete with a State of Hawaii Commendation from Governor Linda Lingle.

After finishing the 2006 field season by successfully collecting over 18 tons of debris, the Marine Debris team was very excited to be recognized by the community for their outstanding efforts at protecting coral reef ecosystems in the NWHI. Their hard work and their commitment to building and sustaining multi-organizational partnerships are very deserving of this award.

Since 1996, the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center has collected over 560 tons of derelict fishing gear from the coral reefs in the NWHI, with the support of the Coral Reef Conservation Program, the Marine Debris Program, and a multitude of Federal, State, and local partners.

Cordell Bank NMS Teams Up with Renowned Biologist/Author Sylvia Earle

The Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary provided information to Dr. Sylvia Earle about the known marine debris occurrences on Cordell Bank. Dr. Earle is actively working on gaining additional support for a fall cruise that will test various methods of removing marine debris. This cruise is sponsored by a grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to test various methods of deep-water gear removal. After meeting with the contractor, a list of action items was drafted and the team has started to tackle various aspects of preparation for the upcoming cruise. The cruise, scheduled to begin at the end of October, is a partnership between U.C. Davis Sea Doc Society, the Marine Debris Program and the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Marine Debris in the News

NOAA MDP Response to opinion commentary published Honolulu Advertiser in the "Letters and Commentary" Section

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060901/OPINION02/609120305/1108/LETTERS>

NOAA to Discuss Whale Entanglement

<http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/local/15541713.htm>

Ports to clean up harbour

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=46740>

This weekly report is distributed by NOAA's Office of Response & Restoration, Marine Debris Program.